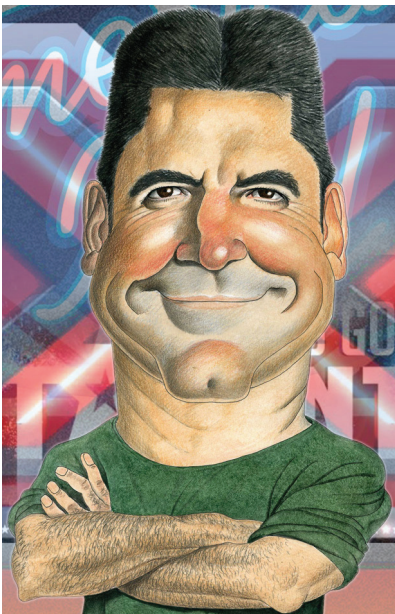


Simon Cowell hits 50



■ **1959:** Born Oct 7, in Brighton, UK

■ **1976:** Gets job in mail room of recording giant **EMI Music Publishing**

■ **1989:** Offered position as A&R Consultant at **BMG**, where his signings include million-selling band **Westlife**

■ **2001:** Becomes judge on new UK talent show, **Pop Idol**. Brutally honest comments make him star of show

■ **2002:** Launches **American Idol** – “**Mr Nasty**” helps make show among highest-rated in U.S. TV history

■ **2004:** Launches **The X Factor** in UK, where winner receives £1m recording contract

■ **2006:** **Got Talent** format starts, has spawned spin-offs in over 20 countries

■ **2009:** Forbes Magazine estimates Cowell's 2008-09 earnings at **\$75m**